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SUBJECT: KARZAI ADVISOR ON AFGHAN-PAK PEACE JIRGA
NEGOTIATIONS

REF: ISLAMABAD 3012

¶1. (SBU) Farooq Wardak, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs and a close advisor to President Karzai, told PolCouns negotiations on the Oct. 10-11 Peace Jirga between Karzai and new Pakistani President Zardari had been productive, with both presidents agreeing to expand the participants from 25 to 30 members on each side to accommodate more diverse representation from Pakistan.

¶2. (SBU) The Peace Jirga is a follow-up to a grand jirga held last year in Kabul. Recent tensions in Afghanistan-Pakistan relations had held up preparations for the current jirga, but renewed efforts by Karzai, Zardari, and Pakistani Prime Minister Gilani to smooth over disagreements brought plans back on track, according to Wardak (reftel).

¶3. (SBU) Wardak said when Pakistani officials presented a list of 25 names for their participants to the Afghan side, Karzai noted the absence of key Pashtun and Baluch leaders, including Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao (North West Frontier Province), Mahmood Khan Achakzai (Baluchistan), and Mandokhel (Baluchistan). Wardak said the two Baluch leaders had called Karzai while the president was en route to Pakistan for meetings with Zardari and Gilani to complain. Karzai pressed for their inclusion, and the Pakistanis agreed, upping the participant list to 30 to create room for the new names. Of the original 25 Pakistani names, Wardak said 18 were from North West Frontier Province, five from Baluchistan, and one each from Sindh and Punjab.

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